

After that day, all my letters to Emma went through the doctor. During one of his routine visits he said, "I am worried about some of my patients. They are terribly depressed. None of them hopes to live to see his family again. I would like them to have their daily walk with you. You have had prison experience and could cheer them up. I shall tell them that my prescription is a walk with Woytinsky."

The prisoners were allowed a half-hour walk in a small pentagonal court in the heart of the old bastion. The court was so arranged that one could see nothing but the five white walls, the small doors in each corner, and the sky. But the sky was deep blue at that season and the air was fresh and crisp. There I met the members of the Provisional Government. Most of them were no weaklings and had plenty of personal courage, but all were haunted by fear for their lives and were unable to accept danger as soldiers do in the trenches. The Communist newspapers were carrying on a slanderous campaign against them as the deadliest enemies of the people, and this campaign bore fruit in the attitude of the troops stationed in the fortress. A company of guards had passed a resolution threatening to massacre the prisoners if the enemies of the people continued their criminal activities. I remember a peculiar expression in the resolution; referring to the example of the French Revolution, it threatened to "repeat the November massacres." The style of the resolution made me think of Trotsky's oratory at Yakor Plaza.

The families of the former ministers implored the People's Commissars to transfer them from the fortress to a safer place. Finally the government permitted the transfer of two members of the deposed Cabinet, Shingarev and Kokoshkin, to a private hospital. That day, during the usual walk in the court, I met Konovalov, a man for whom I had developed sincere sympathy and respect. For the first time he spoke not of death, but of snow and sky. Next morning I saw him again. His face was ashen and he was propped up against a wall, unable to walk. He said to me, "They murdered them in their beds. . . ."

The evening after Shingarev and Kokoshkin were transferred to the hospital, a band of soldiers and sailors entered their room, tore them from their beds, and beat them to death. The murderers were not prosecuted and the affair was interpreted in Bolshevik newspapers as a spontaneous manifestation of the people's wrath against their oppressors. Mob lynching was becoming routine.

On her next visit to the fortress, Emma pressed into my hand a tiny package of cyanide—to spare me humiliation and torture in the ultimate emergency.